



Kent County

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Over the past year, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension partnered with Kent County to continue strengthening youth, families, businesses and communities. Your MSU Extension staff members, grounded in local relationships, serve by bringing the university's research and resources to provide outreach and education in the areas Kent County residents need it most.



In this report, we're excited to share about the people and programs that are improving the lives of Kent County residents in many ways, including helping grow Michigan's agriculture economy, encouraging sustainable use of our natural resources, controlling health care costs by giving individuals the information they need to manage chronic illness and preparing tomorrow's leaders. From an in-person workshop to online education, MSU Extension professionals work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure their success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

We're passionate about serving Kent County and are looking forward to a new year of serving. Thank you for your continued support of MSU Extension and for partnering with us to make a difference.

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MISSION:

Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

2017 4-H CONNECTIONS

Kent County 4-H Clubs.....	66
4-H members (traditional club enrollment)	902
Special Interest program participation	1,226
4-H Overnight and Day Camping Programs	17
Teen volunteers	42
Adult volunteers	218

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MSU Extension's Expanded Digital Reach



More than 3.7 million people viewed more than 7.2 million pages on MSUE website



~1.3 million newsletters covering 90 topic areas were distributed to about 16,900 email addresses



More than 3,500 Facebook followers and more than 2,800 Twitter followers.

Based on data for 2015-16 program year.

Keeping Businesses Strong



When you support MSU Extension, you support food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy in your community.



Participant Quote:

“I basically gain more confidence in what I’m raising and in selling. That is huge. And each event gives me a more rounded education in the whole arena. Thanks.”

Livestock Producer Education

For the seventh consecutive year, MSU Extension meat quality educator, Jeannine Schwehofer, provided education at the Byron Center Meat’s annual producer appreciation and education day. Approximately 100 livestock producers were in attendance. This year’s program included a presentation on marketing meat to millennials, pricing, packaging, and how to tell your farm’s story. In 2017, 91% of evaluation respondents indicated an increase in knowledge of meat marketing. Over the years, 50% of evaluation respondents indicated having made a change to their business as a result of this training. Two people changed their marketing strategy, five people have changed their feeding ratios and one person reported selling more animals through direct marketing versus the auction as a result of the program.

Supporting Beginning Farmers

MSU Extension also works to support people interested in becoming farmers through a variety of programs, including: [The MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series](#), [The MSU Vets to Ag program](#), [The MSU Student Organic Farm Certificate Program](#), and the [MSU Institute of Agricultural Technology](#).

MSU Product Center

The MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy. The MSUE educator has special training as an innovation counselor to deliver these services. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSUE office or the client’s home or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. The educator also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling and packaging assistance.

In Kent County, 687 counseling sessions took place to assist 82 local entrepreneurs in starting new businesses and expanding existing businesses. Fourteen new ventures were launched and 48 new jobs were created. Over \$30 million of new investment was made and \$1.3 million in new sales were reported. The MSU Product Center is facilitating economic impact across Kent County and west Michigan.

MSU Product Center Winners



Start-up to Watch Award - Nutcase Vegan Meats

MSU Product Center assisted an up-and-coming company with great potential serving a unique and needed market niche for those looking for organic and gluten-free meat alternatives. The Start-up to Watch Award recognizes an emerging company that has made tremendous progress but has even greater potential to expand the business. This year's award was presented to Andrew Maternowski and Monica Randles of Nutcase Vegan Meats. Both are board certified physicians who recognized the need for great tasting protein products that are satisfying. Andrew and Monica created a flavorful walnut-based "meat" which is gluten-free, soy-free, and corn-free. The business started manufacturing in 2016 at the Downtown Market in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and when they needed help with packaging, processing and operating efficiencies, they turned to the MSU Product Center. They sell their products frozen, and consumer response has been very positive. Nutcase Vegan Meats is featured on seven Michigan restaurant and country club menus. Their products are sold online and in 15 stores across the Lower Peninsula and Wisconsin, plus they are partnering with Creative Dining Services and Google of Ann Arbor.



2017 Director's Award - Clara's Cookies

MSU Product Center helped a former teacher gain the confidence to go from educator to social entrepreneur and start her own business that gives children the chance to find forever families. The Director's Award was presented to Rebecca Cruttenden, founder of Clara's Cookies, for her company's social entrepreneurship. In addition to Clara Cookies, Rebecca is the founder of Team Orphans, which endeavors to help abandoned children with special needs. Competing in Ironman events in their honor, she has raised over \$200,000 in the last six years for Team Orphans adoption grants and has helped 40 children come home to forever families since 2010. Rebecca started making protein cookies four years ago for her Ironman training and racing. As she shared them with family and friends, the demand made it clear that she was onto something with greater potential. She created a marketing plan that capitalized on athletes' desire to compete for a good cause, as well as businesses who support them, and people who need gluten-free products. Clara's Cookies are individually wrapped, large, gluten-free protein cookies that can be used for training, a tasty meal replacement, or snack. The cookies are delivered by volunteers to 30 locations in the Grand Rapids area, including Premier Food Service with dining services in five large business locations.

Community Food Systems



Recipes
FOR
Success

A DOWNTOWN MARKET
FOOD BUSINESS SEMINAR

SPONSORED BY:



Owned and operated by:  SpartanNash
Leading food partner

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

CSA Open House

For the third consecutive year, MSUE partnered with the West Michigan Growers Group to host *Growers Fare: CSA Open House* at the Downtown Market on March 25th. During the 2017 event, 15 local farms participated with attendance from over 500 local community members. The event provides an opportunity for community members to meet local CSA farmers and connect with their local food system. A number of the farms sold shares to members at the event and made connections with many more potential customers. This event is part of a larger effort to boost public participation in Community Supported Agriculture in West Michigan and also support local collaboration and network development.



Kent County Food Policy Council

In addition, MSUE has worked with local partners in the development of a new Kent County Food Policy Council. As part of our work with developing this council, we make continual efforts to include diverse voices from the community. This include expanding the council formation committee to include community members of color who can better speak to the needs of these communities within Kent County. MSUE is also in the process of developing a community engagement plan and process for the Council that is specifically focused on racial equity.

Farm to School Training

MSUE is actively engaged in many farm-to-school initiatives in Michigan, including efforts to offer local foods in school cafeterias, school garden programs, fundraisers that take advantage of local products, farmer visits to school classrooms and cafeterias, and field trips to nearby farms. In Kent County, Community Systems Extension Educator, Garrett Ziegler, trained 20 School Food Service Staff and Directors on local procurement strategies, menu planning, and the rules and regulations around school food procurement. In 2017, the State of Michigan's 10 Cent a Meal grant program awarded funds to two Kent County school districts, Lowell and Thornapple Kellogg. These grant funds were used to purchase Michigan grown and/or processed fruits and vegetables for school meals.

Recipes for Success

Recipes for Success was a series course that offered free educational services to budding and accelerating food entrepreneurs. This three-part series was 2 years in the making in cooperation with the *Downtown Market in Grand Rapids* and was attended by 131 adults. MSUE Educators coordinated speakers from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as specialists from Michigan State University.



Kent County 4-H Program



Pictured above: 4-H Program Volunteer, Laura Murray, planting beans with children that visited the Fulton Farmer's Market 4-H booth.

Fulton Farmer's Market

MSU Extension was approached by the Manager of Fulton Farmer's Market for a partnership with the 4-H Program. In June 2017, 4-H Program Coordinator, Melinda Pepper manned a booth, which was provided at no cost, to engage the public and educate them about what 4-H has to offer. Melinda and her team provided literature and helped each child plant a bean and explained how they will grow into a plant and edible beans, and then explained that 4-H clubs can be designed around any interest they may have. Melinda recruited a 4-H teen volunteer to continue the market education through the programming months.

Whitecaps Baseball Game

On April 21st, 2017, the FifthThird Ballpark recognized Michigan's 4-H Program. 4-H Program Coordinators from Southwest Michigan gathered with their 4-H friend, volunteers and alumni at a Whitecaps Baseball game in Grand Rapids. A 4-Her from Kent County stood up on the infield pre-game and recited the 4-H Pledge while the pledge scrolled on the big screen and spectators stood and said the pledge aloud with her. The 4-Hers all sat in reserved seating, and were given 4-H fans to wave. MSU Extension's 4-H Program has a far reach in Kent counties and the surrounding areas and continues to grow.

Horse Camp

In July, 2017, a two-day Horse Camp was held at the Kent County Fairgrounds. Any 4-H member with a horse was encouraged to participate. MSUE Program Coordinator facilitated capacity building opportunities with the 4-H youth that attended.



Pictured above: 4-H Program participants posing for a picture with Whitecaps mascot, Roxy the River Rascal.



4-H Youth Development

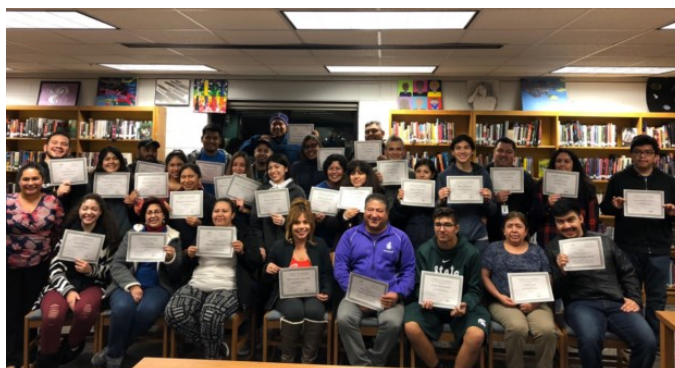


Éxito Educativo

The Éxito Educativo (E2) program in Kent County is a newly launched 4-H SPIN (special interest) club for Latino and Hispanic high school aged youth and their families. Based on a curriculum developed by the Julian Samora Institute and delivered by 4-H staff and volunteers, this program helps students and their families learn more about post-secondary education options and processes. Many youth in the program will be the first in their families to attend college and attend for six weeks to learn about the importance of higher education, how to facilitate family communication, the academic requirements for high school graduation, career exploration, accessing financial resources, and navigating the college admissions process. Delivered in both English and Spanish, the program engaged 20 families at Wyoming High School and impacted 26 students, each of whom left Éxito Educativo more comfortable with American educational systems and better prepared to access the opportunities therein.

“This is one of the most powerful programs I’ve been a part of in my time with 4-H,” said Susan Fenton, Kent County 4-H program coordinator who delivers the program. “Parents and youth are enthusiastic and grateful for this program. They show up week after week, deeply engaged in the conversations and eager to learn more. We were so excited to recently learn several of our program graduates were accepted into major universities.” Éxito Educativo is a uniquely impactful program, particularly within the context of Michigan 4-H. Unlike many youth development programs, E2 requires parents to attend each of the six sessions along with the students. This increases family communication and participant buy-in. It gives parents and youth opportunities to create dialogue around a sometimes-difficult topic and develop pride and ownership of the youth’s educational journey. Due to the success of the program, Susan Fenton, the MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator has secured additional \$17,000 of funding to implement the program in two different schools in 2018.

Éxito Educativo Fall 2017 cohort



Home and Garden Show and Exploration Days



Home and Garden Show - Bugs Rule!

The local Home and Garden Show in Grand Rapids allowed the MSU Extension Master Gardener graduates to host a "Bugs Rule" presentation on March 3, 2017 that partnered with the 4-H Program Coordinators. Eight local schools attended: West Michigan Academy, Godfry Lee, Cesar Chavez, Sherwood Park, Campus, Martin Luther King, Harrison, and North Park Montessori, with a total of 612 students, 23 teachers and aides, and 32 volunteers. A ten minute presentation was given that educated about bugs and incorporated the 4-H Clover for the students to remember clues that were used later during the Scavenger Hunt. After the Scavenger Hunt, the students planted a flower they were able to take home, along with literature containing teaching guides on 4-H, what 4-H represents, and how to become involved with your local 4-H program.



Exploration Days

This MSU pre-college program gives young people a chance to experience college life, learn new ideas and skills, and meet people from across Michigan. Approximately 2,500 participants annually attend from across the state. More than 200 action-filled classroom and field trip sessions are offered throughout the MSU campus and at various off-campus locations. There were 17 students from Kent County that traveled to East Lansing to participate in the 2017 Exploration Day event.

Photo: 2017 4-H Exploration Days participants in the "Portfolios that Work – Are You Ready to Interview?" session.



Keeping People Healthy



Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.



Improving nutrition and increasing physical activities in Michigan communities

Nutrition Promotion

MSU Extension delivers relevant, evidence-based education to help people in Michigan stay healthy throughout their lifespans. Programs teach participants how to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods and increase physical activity. According to the Kent County 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment, obesity among adults increased from 27.6% in 2014 to 34.1% in 2017. Obesity rates in youth also increased in both middle school and high school students. Our nutrition instructors are working hard to deliver education and create programs that will help to curb these rates.

From October 2016—September 2017, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed nutrition education programs reached 507 adults and 827 youth from Kent County. MSU Extension staff conducted 41 adult face-to-face workshops in a series and 40 youth face-to-face workshops in 2017. These programs are supported with funds from the USDA grant for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed).

Diabetes Prevention

Kent County's rate of diabetes is 9.2% which is on par with the state average. However, these rates are heading in the wrong direction. To address this issue, Christi Demitz, MSU Extension Disease Prevention Educator, reached 6 adults through a *Diabetes PATH* series of workshops in 2017. She reached an additional 65 adults from Kent County through seven *Dining with Diabetes* four-class series held at Gerald R. Ford Job Corp throughout the year.

Results from a statewide evaluation of all MSU Extension nutrition programs showed that:

- 79% of youth participants improved their abilities or gained knowledge about how to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Guidelines.
- 79% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one nutrition practice, such as preparing foods without adding salt, or using labels to make food choices.
- 73% of adult participants made a positive change in at least one food resource management practice, such as planning meals in advance or comparing prices.



Keeping People Healthy



Encouraging healthy behaviors helps reduce health care costs by providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.



Children can be taught how to pay attention and pause before reacting to stress.

Photo credit: Pixabay.

Social and Emotional Health

According to the Kent Count 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment, Mental Health is the number one priority health issue for the county. The MSU Extension Educators, Holly Tiret and Georgina Perry, worked to deliver series classes and one time presentations to over 1,000 Kent County residents. The below information highlights the successful, evidence-based curriculum used to reach Kent County residents.

[The Nurturing Families Series](#) works to educate parents, grandparents, childcare providers and others who care for children, ranging from birth to teens. This course is based on research showing that children who receive affection and nurture from their caregivers have the opportunity for healthy development. Participants in this course learn how to enhance positive relationships with children, how to discipline without spanking, child growth and development, how to handle stress and anger, and how to help build self-esteem. 116 adults from Kent County participated in this program in 2017.

[RELAX: Alternatives to Anger](#) is an educational program that actively engages participants to gain knowledge and skills to constructively deal with anger. The core concepts include recognizing anger signals, empathizing, listening, accepting that others' anger is not about you, and letting go of the past in order to maintain a present perspective. Participants learn to better manage their anger and stress at home, in the workplace and in school. In Kent County, 297 were trained in this new curriculum, developed by an MSU Extension Educator and housed in the county.



[Stress Less with Mindfulness](#) class introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. Research has shown that the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction courses are effective in reducing stress-related symptoms such as worry, depression, and physical tension, and be helpful in managing cardiac disease and diabetes. Extension Educator, Holly Tiret, conducted eight series classes in Kent County and reached 132 people.

Finance and Homeownership



MSU Extension has an important role to play in addressing issues of financial health of individuals and families through community-based educational programs. The overarching goal of these efforts is for Michigan consumers to become aware of their personal financial profile, to adopt sound financial and housing practices – including managing spending and savings plan and utilizing financial products and services in a beneficial manner.

Michigan families continue to struggle with income and debt issues. Unemployment numbers are lower than they have been since before the Great Recession of 2008. However, wages continue to lag and people still struggle to save money. Home values have gone up, but not in every county and there is a lack of affordable housing due to increase in demand for rentals. Medical insurance premiums have continued to increase while energy costs have continued to stay low.



In 2017, Extension Educator, Jennifer Ortquist, reached 372 Kent County residents with a series of classes pertaining to financial capacity, homeownership, foreclosure intake, and money management. MSU Extension has created partnerships with multiple stakeholders in the county to improve outcomes in the County. In partnership with the Kent County Health Department, MSUE provided a 6 hour money management series for 26 Kent County Health Department employees.

In addition, in partnership with Cherry Health, MSU Extension also provided a money management workshop, *Creating and Managing a Spending Plan* for 26 Cherry Health AmeriCorps Service Members as well as a money management workshop, *Creating and Managing a Spending Plan* during the Annual West Michigan AmeriCorps Service Member Conference, which was attended by 49 Kent County residents.

Food Safety



MSU Extension efforts in ensuring safe and secure food lead to a healthy population, which in turn helps keep health care costs in check and our communities viable.

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years. It aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.

Reducing foodborne illness through education

The National Institutes of Health estimates that every year, 48 million people in the United States become ill and 3,000 die from pathogens in food. Causes range from outdated home food preservation practices to unsafe sanitizing practices at public events and small businesses. MSU Extension food safety training workshops include: 16-hour ServSafe trainings, 8-hour ServSafe trainings, food preservation, Cottage Food Law, and Cooking for Crowds. MSU Food Safety Extension Educators, Jane Hart and Kara Lynch, partners with the Kent County Health Department to bring a ServSafe Food Service/Safety Certification Training. Thirty-five Kent County residents received their Food Service Certification through MSUE in 2017.

On-farm food safety

MSU Extension has been working with several partners around the state to ensure Michigan farmers are informed on the [Food Safety Modernization Act \(FSMA\)](#) and its potential impacts on their businesses. FSMA is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years. This is a significant impact to fresh produce growers because it calls for new standards and training programs.

In addition, MSUE is partnering with Cherry Capital Foods to build the first statewide USDA Certified Group GAP program in the nation. MSUE is providing compliance education through a robust suite of resources, events, and trainings, which will assist growers in obtaining GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification.



Supporting Food and Agriculture



When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

Photo: Golden Delicious apples stung by BMSB, 2016



Apple production:

Kent County ranks 7th in the U.S. of all apple producing counties, and is the leading county in Michigan. The 2012 Ag Census data showed Michigan with 11,592 acres of apples owned by 120 family farms. There are over 33,000 acres of apples in the entire state of MI, so Kent County alone, produces over one-third of the entire MI apple crop. If you add in the nearby counties to encompass “The Ridge”, the total acreage hovers around 20,000 acres, making it a very important apple producing area. Extension educators, Amy Irish-Brown and Phil Schwallier, lead the Kent County Extension efforts for this specialty crop. Together, they conducted 96 visits to local farms to aide in issue identification and problem solving to ensure farms are profitable and the product is viable.

BMSB

In recent years, the Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs (BMSB) have been detected on Michigan’s apple farms. MSU is conducting ongoing research to understand the pest management techniques need to be utilized by Michigan Farmers. On June 22, 2017, MSU Extension hosted a half-day clinic with specialists from MSU and Rutgers to discuss the detection, monitoring and control of the BMSB. The clinic, which was offered at no cost, has 70 people in attendance, 34 of whom were Kent County residents.

IFTA

Michigan was once again the host for the International Fruit Tree Association (IFTA) and their summer tour from July 16 to 18, 2017. The members of IFTA like to visit Michigan fruit crops due to the progression our producers exhibit towards precision orcharding and modern plantings. This forward movement is due not only to the growers themselves, but also from the influence of MSUE Educators, Phil Schwallier and Amy Irish-Brown. These two are members of a greater MSU Fruit team and they cover the counties in the general Grand Rapids area where much of the Michigan apple crop is produced.

For this three day tour event, we visited ten different farm sites in the Belding area and the Ridge with several stops at each farm. We visited a world renowned storage manufacturing company in Sparta, the MSU Clarksville Research Center and the Plant Pathology farm at MSU in East Lansing. Over 200 people were in attendance, with half being from Michigan, and the other half comprising of attendees from other states and countries.

Pollinator Protection



MSU Extension works to connect producers with the resources of Michigan State University to address current issues in the field.



Pollinator Protection

According to the National Gardening Association (NGA), 70% of households engage in some type of gardening. Taking into consideration 2010 census data of Michigan households and average number of people per household, this equates to a potential consumer horticulture audience of over 6.7 M Michigan citizens. The actions of home gardeners positively or negatively impact many important aspects of a sustainable future such as water quality, food security, healthy soils and pollinator protection.

Pollinators are essential to our environment and are uniquely linked to our food supply. They pollinate more than 85 percent of the world's flowering plants and are ultimately responsible for the seeds and fruits that humans, song birds and even black bears consume. In 2017, Rebecca Finneran, Extension Educator for Consumer Horticulture, increased her efforts for Pollinator protection as concerns arose about the decline of pollinating insects. Gardeners are seeking to learn how to make positive contributions towards their conservation. Understanding habitat needs and food sources, while adjusting our garden maintenance routine, is a step forward in pollinator conservation.

Through Smart Gardening seminars and conferences, as well as the Grand Rapids Home and Garden Show, Finneran reached over 1,000 people with Pollinator Protection education. In addition, she produced an educational youtube video entitled "Smart Gardening for Pollinators" which has over 4,000 views.



Photo: Pollinator information and the Grand Bee Hotel featured in the MSUE Grand Ideas Garden



Dairy Production



Kent County ranks 13th in Michigan milk production according to the 2012 USDA Ag Census.

Dairy Nutrition Roundtable Discussions

This roundtable discussion, held in December, 2017 in Comstock Park, provided an open forum for participants to discuss current issues in dairy cattle feeding and nutrition, and ask questions of specialists. The roundtable was hosted by new Dairy Educator, Martin Mangual Carrasquilla, and was attended by Dairy nutrition faculty from MSU which included Dr. Mike Allen, Dr. Adam Lock, and Dr. Herb Bucholtz. In addition, dairy nutrition industry professionals that serve dairy farmers in west Michigan also provided information. Topics included trends, research, and concerns in dairy nutrition.

Puerto Rico Dairy Labor Training and Management

Faced with a shrinking domestic workforce, dairy producers in Michigan have increasingly turned to foreign-born workers. However, while farmers have complied with the labor laws, the risk of illegal workers has held back producers who desire to do what is right, but cannot determine the legal status of employees. In addition, the risk of employee turnover has been too high on many farms.

This project will educate and prepare Michigan dairy farm employers for employment of screened and trained employees from Puerto Rico. These workers are legal residents of the US. The project will set up a sustainable system by establishing a partnership with Extension faculty and staff at the University of Puerto Rico to provide the initial steps of screening and training in Puerto Rico, and a system to bring employees to dairy farms that enroll and qualify for the program.

The project will also work individually with farms to identify and reduce their employee turnover rate through teaching them improved employee management and hiring practices, and improved cultural understanding.



Making the Most of Our Natural Assets



Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach.

A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 33 university-based programs.

District Council Invited Lawmakers to Learn on the Water

On September 8, 2017, members of MSU Extension's District 7 Council headed out on the *D.J. Angus*, a vessel owned and operated by GVSU for the purpose of educating people about the Great Lakes and inland waters. Also in attendance were State Representatives Roger Victory, Rob Verheulen, and Jim Lilly, as well as Matt Kooiman, Public Policy Manager for Congressman Huizenga.

Council members and leaders participated in water quality sampling in Spring Lake and Lake Michigan led by GVSU staff. In addition to learning about how invasive species have dramatically affected our lakes, the group heard from MSU Extension's District Sea Grant Educator Dr. Dan O'Keefe on connections between our waterways and coastal economies.

The group learned about Michigan Sea Grant's work with the Lake Michigan salmon and trout fishery, a cornerstone of the \$7.1 billion Great Lakes sport fishery. Sea Grant has been instrumental in helping anglers understand their fishery and share data with biologists through the *Salmon Ambassadors* and *Great Lakes Angler Diary* programs. Last year many anglers were caught off guard by the Chinook stocking cut proposal. MSU Extension News articles helped people better understand the issue by addressing some common misconceptions.

- **Most Chinook salmon caught in Lake Michigan are wild, not stocked.** According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Mass Marking Program, wild-spawned Chinook salmon made up 71 percent of the Chinook catch for Michigan anglers in 2014-2015.
- **Even ports that are not near spawning rivers rely mostly on wild fish.** Grand Haven is a good example of a port that does not support natural reproduction. Volunteers with the *Salmon Ambassadors* program found that 74 percent of Chinook salmon caught in the Grand Haven area in 2015 were wild.
- **Alewife are at a historic low.** The USGS Great Lakes Science Center's bottom trawl survey found that yearling and older alewife biomass density dropped to the lowest levels since monitoring began in 1973.
- **Natural reproduction is a huge factor.** In 2017, Lake Michigan stocking is being reduced from 1.80 to 1.35 million Chinook salmon. If wild reproduction returns to normal, we could see an increase of over 3 million young Chinook salmon entering Lake Michigan in 2017. This could completely overwhelm the effect of the stocking cut in terms of the total number of Chinook salmon available in Lake Michigan. In other words, there is a good chance that people will not notice any decrease in the quality of fishing over the next few years. The bad news is that Lake Michigan still appears to have too many mouths to feed and too little food.

Local Government Finance and Policy



MSU's Center for Local Government Finance and Policy works to provide the best research and teaching to help local government officials make informed decisions.

Only with healthy, vibrant communities can Michigan residents be expected to thrive. To help Michigan prosper in a sensible, sustainable fiscally responsible way, MSU Extension launched the [Center for Local Government Finance and Policy](#) in late 2015. MSU Extension has been engaged in the education and training of local government officials in Michigan for over 50 years. The Center will build upon this work and will institutionalize research and outreach on state and local governments at MSU for years to come.

The mission of the Center is to be a leader in the production and dissemination of the best research and teaching on issues of local government finance and related policy issues. The Center will work through a broad and diverse network of affiliates from within and outside of MSU. The Center is supported by many key partners, including the Mott Foundation, Pew Charitable Trust and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Recent research reports from the Center:

- Legacy costs
- Fiscal distress indicators
- The ability of local governments to deliver services
- County revenue sources in other states
- County revenue sharing
- The impact of the Headlee millage rollback provision on county property tax revenues

The Center is led by Dr. Eric Scorsone, who is on temporary leave from MSU to serve as the Senior Deputy Treasurer for the State of Michigan. Robert Kleine is serving as interim director in Dr. Scorsone's absence.

MSU Extension Staff Located in Kent County

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